



Attorney Docket: 60557.000003

2643

#8

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Patent Application of:) Examiner: Unknown
)
Blake BOOKSTAFF) Group Art Unit: 2643
)
Serial No.: 10/064,402) Confirmation No.: 7448
)
Filed: July 10, 2002) Attorney Docket No.: 60557.000003

For: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE TO ERRONEOUS
TELEPHONE CALLS

Mail Stop Petition
Commissioner of Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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AUG 22 2003

Technology Center 2600

TRANSMITTAL

Sir:

The following are enclosed for consideration in the above-identified application:

	FEE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transmittal Letter	\$0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Petition To Make Special	\$130.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check in the amount of \$130.00	\$0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Return Postcard	\$0
TOTAL FEES BEING SUBMITTED	\$130.00

In the event that any fees are necessitated by this filing, please charge the undersigned's **Deposit Account Number 50-0206**.

Respectfully submitted,

HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP

Ryan S. Davidson
Registration No. 51,596

Date: August 20, 2003

1900 K Street, N.W., Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20006-1109
Ph. (202) 955-1500
Fax (202) 778-2201



PATENT APPLICATION No. 10/064,402
ATTORNEY DOCKET No. 60557.000003

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PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL

This is a Petition to Make Special under 37 C.F.R. § 1.102(d) for accelerated examination of the above-referenced application that was filed on July 10, 2002. The petition fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(i) is enclosed. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any further fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0206.

This Petition to Make Special is being made under MPEP 708.02 (VIII). In accordance with that section, the Applicant has caused a pre-examination search to be made. The Applicant engaged a professional patent research firm to identify any relevant art. The patent research firm performed a search covering Class 379, subclasses 88.22, 213.01, 214.01 and 218.01. The patent research firm further conducted a computer database search on the USPTO EAST and WEST systems. Examiner Scott Weaver in Art Unit 2742 was consulted in confirming the field of search. The patent research firm's search was directed towards forwarding misdialled phone

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numbers to directory assistance. More particularly, the search was directed towards forwarding misdialed, unused and unassigned phone numbers to directory assistance with playing of advertisements while on hold.

In addition, the Applicant searched on the United States Patent and Trademark Office database (www.USPTO.gov), for all years available, according to the following search parameters:

Classes	Subclasses	Search Fields	Search Terms / Restrictions
379, 455	(no restriction)	(all fields)	the following terms alone or in combination: “directory assistance,” “telephone directory,” “operator assistance,” “unavailable,” “unused,” “erroneous,” “misdial\$,” “unassigned,” “not completed,” “forward\$,” “rout\$,” “intercept\$,” “advertis\$,” “commercial\$,” “promotion\$,” “informational\$,” and “infomercial\$”

The Applicant previously submitted an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) on October 10, 2002. A Supplemental IDS is being filed herewith disclosing additional references found in the pre-examination search conducted to meet the requirements for filing this petition.

Out of all of the documents now submitted to the Patent Office, the following documents are believed by the applicant to be the most relevant to the claims pending in the application as filed.

1. U.S. Patent No. 3,928,724 to Bryam et al (“Bryam”)

(Bryam was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Bryam discloses a voice-actuated automatic directory assistance system whereby a caller is connected to a voice-actuated directory assistance service upon dialing a directory assistance number. The Bryam system provides recorded instructions and responds to the spelled name of the subscriber by providing coded digital signals to a computer. The computer identifies the subscriber from the digital code and addresses a memory of recorded information that may be used to inform the user of the subscriber’s correct telephone number. Bryam contains no

disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Bryam disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Bryam does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Bryam's disclosure, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service that may include, for example, the directory assistance service disclosed by Bryam.

2. U.S. Patent No. 4,053,949 to Recca et al ("Recca")

(Recca was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Recca discloses a system for use with a plurality of directory assistance or intercept telephone operator positions in which each position has means for monitoring a plurality of line conductor pairs and stores data representative of the status of a plurality of telephone numbers. An operator or a number translator may access this stored data to provide the status of a telephone number to a caller. Recca contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Recca disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Recca does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Recca, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

3. U.S. Patent No. 4,446,337 to Cofer ("Cofer")

(Cofer was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Cofer discloses a method and apparatus for delivering intercept messages whereby the intercept messages originate at the originating office rather than at the destination office or some intermediate switching location. After an intercept condition occurs at the destination office or some other location remote of the originating office, an intercept message signal is returned to the originating office. Using this intercept message signal, the originating office provides the appropriate intercept message to the caller. Cofer contains no disclosure related to the routing of

intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Cofer does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Cofer, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service. The automatic routing of the telephone call to the directory assistance service may occur instead of, or in addition to, the playback of an intercept message as disclosed by Cofer.

4. U.S. Patent No. 4,071,698 to Barger, Jr. et al ("Barger")

Barger discloses a system and method for marketing merchandise or services via a telephone network. An incoming call from a customer is received and the customer is connected with a customer service operator. Based on input provided by the customer, one or more demonstrations related to merchandise or services are provided to the customer. If the customer indicates a desire to purchase the demonstrated merchandise or services, the operator may obtain billing and shipping information from the customer. Barger, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Barger disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Barger, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

5. U.S. Patent No. 4,608,460 to Carter et al ("Carter")

(Carter was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Carter discloses a method and apparatus for providing directory assistance whereby information from a caller is received via a specified number of dual-tone, multi-frequency (DTMF) signals. The DTMF signals are used to identify a subscriber and information relating to the subscriber is conveyed to the caller. Carter further discloses means for connecting the caller to the subscriber at the caller's option. Carter contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Carter disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Carter does not disclose the

provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Carter, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service that may include, for example, the directory assistance service disclosed by Carter.

6. U.S. Patent No. 4,791,666 to Cobb et al ("Cobb")

(Cobb was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Cobb discloses a method and apparatus for connecting a telephone central office having step-by-step or cross bar-type electromechanical switching equipment to a remotely located automatic intercept message system. The Cobb patent describes a system whereby a plurality of sleeve leads are scanned for seizure, where each sleeve lead correlates to a preassigned telephone number for which an intercept message is to be delivered when a calling party calls the number. When a seizure is detected, an outgoing trunk is attached and the corresponding phone number is retrieved from memory and sent out to an automatic intercept system. The automatic intercept system then plays back an intercept message corresponding to the called number. Cobb contains no disclosure relating to routing intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Cobb does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Cobb, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

7. U.S. Patent No. 4,850,007 to Marino et al ("Marino")

Marino discloses a system for providing toll services at reduced rate in exchange for advertising provided to a caller. The caller dials an information system or directory assistance service and is provided with advertisements before being connected. In return for listening to the advertisements, the toll for the information service or directory service may be reduced or eliminated. Marino further discloses providing advertisements that are specific to one or more characteristics associated with the caller. Marino, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Marino

disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Marino, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

8. U.S. Patent No. 4,918,719 to Daudelin ("Daudelin '719")

(Daudelin '719 was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

The Daudelin '719 patent discloses a method for eliminating false requests for telephone operator assistance whereby a voice-processing unit monitors a communication link connected to a customer for a predetermined interval following the provision of an announcement to the customer. In the event that no customer input is sensed during the interval, the communication link to the customer is severed. The Daudelin '719 patent contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does the Daudelin '719 patent disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, the Daudelin '719 patent does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Daudelin '719 patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

9. U.S. Patent No. 4,943,995 to Daudelin et al ("Daudelin '995")

The Daudelin '995 patent discloses a method for providing information to a customer via a telecommunications system. The customer calls a directory number and is connected with a customer station. One or more prerecorded messages or surveys are provided to the caller. Based on the caller's response to the messages/surveys, the caller may be directed to the appropriate vendor's line and/or provided with one or more advertisements. The Daudelin '995 patent, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does the Daudelin '995 patent disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the

telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

10. U.S. Patent No. 4,975,941 to Morganstein et al ("Morganstein")

Morganstein discloses a method and apparatus for allowing calling parties the opportunity to complete their own calls to on-premises switching systems when the telephone extension numbers of the called parties are known to the called parties. The Morganstein patent contains no disclosure to the detection and interception of telephone calls, nor does it disclose the automatic routing or connecting of a caller to a directory assistance service. Further, Morganstein does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Morganstein, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

11. U.S. Patent No. 4,959,855 to Daudelin ("Daudelin '855")

(Daudelin '855 was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

The Daudelin '855 patent discloses a method and apparatus for automatically connecting a caller to another caller identified through a directory assistance service. After a listing has been located in response to a request from the caller during directory assistance, a connection is set up between the caller and the other caller identified by the listing. The Daudelin '855 patent contains no disclosure to the detection and interception of telephone calls, nor does it disclose the automatic routing or connecting of a caller to a directory assistance service. Further, the Daudelin '855 patent does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Daudelin '855 patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

12. U.S. Patent No. 4,979,206 to Padden et al ("Padden")

(Padden was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Padden discloses a method and apparatus for obtaining directory assistance without the assistance of an operator. A customer requests directory assistance and is connected to an automatic speech recognition unit to speak commands for identifying a requested directory number. The spoken commands are converted to data signals and a directory number database is searched using the data signals. If a directory listing is located, the customer is informed of the directory listing and then prompted to speak a command indicating whether a call to the number of the directory listing should be automatically established. If the customer speaks an affirmative command, a call to the number is established. Padden contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of telephone calls to unavailable numbers, nor does Padden disclose automatically routing intercepted telephone calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Padden does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Padden, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

13. U.S. Patent No. 5,448,625 to Lederman ("Lederman")

(Lederman was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Lederman discloses a method and apparatus for routing a telephone call through a telephone network from a caller to a called party designated by the caller via an advertising service apparatus. The advertising service apparatus operates in two modes, one mode including communications between the parties and another mode whereby advertisements are impressed on one or both parties. Lederman contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Lederman disclose routing calls to directory assistance. In contrast to the Lederman patent, the present claims recite a method and system whereby a call made to an unavailable number is intercepted and automatically routed to a directory assistance service while providing one or more advertisements to the caller.

14. U.S. Patent No. 5,473,671 to Partridge, III ("Partridge")

Partridge discloses a method and apparatus for selective screening of incoming calls for cellular telephone systems. A service supplier maintains a list of accepted callers. When a call comes in, a determination is made as to whether the caller is an "accepted" caller. If so, the call is forwarded to the cellular telephone. Otherwise, the caller is offered the option to pay for the call. Partridge contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Partridge disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Partridge does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Partridge, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

15. U.S. Patent No. 5,515,098 to Carles ("Carles")

Carles discloses a system and method for selectively distributing commercial messages over a communications network. Commercial messages are tagged with routing information and converter addresses and are transmitted to be received and displayed at address converters. The particular addresses used are selected based on demographic and other related information. Carles contains no disclosure related to the provision of audio advertisements over a telecommunications network. Further, Carles contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Carles disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Carles, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

16. U.S. Patent No. 5,652,784 to Blen et al ("Blen")

Blen discloses a method and apparatus for providing audio advertising at the initiation of a call. When a caller lifts his/her telephone set, a prerecorded advertisement is provided instead of or in addition to the invitation-to-dial tone. The advertisement may be selected based on characteristics related to the caller. Blen, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting

and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Blen disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Blen, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

17. U.S. Patent No. 5,661,788 to Chin ("Chin")

Chin discloses a method and system for selectively answering incoming telephone calls by enabling user selection of a receiving mode that designates telephone numbers and an alert mode that designates how the user will be notified of incoming calls from the designated telephone numbers. In response to an incoming call during an idle state, an outgoing message requesting the input of the calling party's telephone number is transmitted to the calling party. The calling party's telephone number is compared with the numbers designated within the selective receiving mode to determine whether the user should be notified of the incoming call. Chin contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Chin disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Chin does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Chin, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

18. U.S. Patent No. 5,757,899 to Boulware et al ("Boulware")

Boulware discloses a method and system for a call screening service whereby a caller is provided with a number of call screening features that are subscriber setable via an automated call screening configuration subsystem internal to the telephone switching network. The subscriber can set multiple call screening service activation schedules as well as to set both call screening activation and deactivation timers for immediately activating and deactivating the call screening service, respectively. Boulware contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Boulware disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Boulware does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Boulware, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a

telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

19. U.S. Patent No. 5,802,149 to Hanson ("Hanson")

Hanson discloses a method and system for training a voice dialing system as part of normal voice dialing activities. The voice dialing system connects a caller to directory assistance when a voice-dialing attempt by the caller does not match any voice tags in the caller's voice dialing directory and the caller signals a desire to use directory assistance. The voice dialing system captures and stores the telephone number provided by directory assistance to the caller. Hanson contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers. Rather, Hanson discloses the detection of a voice-dialing attempt to a number not stored in a voice-dialing directory. Further, Hanson does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Hanson, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

20. U.S. Patent No. 5,825,862 to Voit et al ("Voit")

(Voit was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Voit discloses a system and method for altering the destination telephone number of an incoming call. When a switch on a phone number of a customer detects an incoming call, the switch sends a query to a services control point with the calling number of the incoming call. The services control point issues a send data transaction with the retrieved calling party information to the customer's set top box. The calling party information is displayed on the customer's video display and the customer sends an instruction for redirecting the call through the set-top box. Voit contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Voit disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Voit does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Voit, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an

unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

21. U.S. Patent No. 5,835,570 to Wattenbarger ("Wattenbarger")

(Wattenbarger was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Wattenbarger discloses a system and method for automatically accessing a directory assistance service to obtain a telephone number for a spoken voice label that is not contained within a subscriber's personal telephone list. A caller speaks a voice label, where the voice label has an associated telephone number. If a database does not have a telephone number associated with the voice label, the voice dialing system calls a directory assistance database to retrieve the telephone number associated with the voice label from the directory assistance database. Upon retrieval of the desired telephone number, the subscriber is prompted to add the new number to the personal list. Wattenbarger contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Wattenbarger disclose automatically routing a caller to directory assistance. Further, Wattenbarger does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Wattenbarger, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

22. U.S. Patent No. 5,852,775 to Hidary ("Hidary")

Hidary discloses a system for providing advertisements in a cellular telephone system. A caller placing a call via a cellular phone is provided with an advertisement before or while the connection is made. The called party also may be provided with an advertisement. Hidary further discloses targeting the advertisements based on demographic or regional characteristics. Hidary, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Hidary disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Hidary, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call,

providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

23. U.S. Patent No. 5,873,032 to Cox et al ("Cox '032")

The Cox '032 patent discloses a system and method for providing directory assistance service. After being connected to directory service, a call is placed to a telephone number indicated by the caller. The directory assistance service monitors the call and if the called party's line is busy or otherwise unavailable, the caller is presented with a number of options, including redialing the number, leaving a message, or being redirected to directory assistance service. Upon selection of an option by the caller, the requested option is performed. In contrast to the present invention, the Cox '032 patent describes a system and method whereby the directory assistance service places a call to the unavailable number on behalf of the caller and intercepts this phone call when the called party is unavailable. Further, the Cox '032 patent describes reconnecting the caller to directory assistance service only after the caller has provided input indicating the caller's intent to be reconnected to directory assistance service. Additionally, the Cox '032 patent does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Cox '032 patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

24. U.S. Patent No. 5,875,231 to Farfan et al ("Farfan")

(Farfan was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Farfan discloses a hold-on-hold system that allows a first party placed on hold to also place the second party on hold and then hang up. When the second party returns, the first party is notified that the second party has returned from hold and the first party can resume the call. Farfan discloses the provision of an advertisement to the party on hold. In contrast to the present invention, Farfan contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Farfan disclose routing calls to directory assistance, whereas

the present claims recite a method and system whereby a call made to an unavailable number is intercepted and automatically routed to a directory assistance service.

25. U.S. Patent No. 5,878,338 to Alperovich et al ("Alperovich")

Alperovich discloses a method and apparatus for selectively restricting forwarded calls. Upon receipt of an incoming call from a terminal that is incorrectly forwarded, a customer can restrict successive incoming calls that are forwarded from the terminal. Alperovich contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Alperovich disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Alperovich does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Alperovich, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

26. U.S. Patent No. 5,880,770 to Ilcisin et al ("Ilcisin")

Ilcisin discloses a method for providing messaging in a videophone system whereby one or more advertisements or messages are displayed during the set-up time needed to establish a connection between two or more videophones. Ilcisin contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Ilcisin disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Ilcisin, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

27. U.S. Patent No. 5,892,820 to Armstrong et al ("Armstrong")

(Armstrong was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Armstrong discloses a method and system for forwarding a directory assistance call to an intercept system when the number requested by the caller is on intercept. A directory assistance system is used whereby directory assistance callers interact with an operator to identify a directory listing sought by the caller. The operator then may access a directory database to

access information associated with the requested listing. If the requested listing is on intercept, the directory assistance system may interface an intercept system to obtain intercept information and provide the intercept information to the caller. Armstrong contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Armstrong disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Armstrong does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Armstrong, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

28. U.S. Patent No. 5,943,410 to Shaffer et al ("Shaffer")

Shaffer discloses a method and apparatus that allow a telephone user to be automatically connected in sequence to multiple phone numbers in response to a single directory assistance query. Shaffer contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Shaffer disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Shaffer does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Shaffer, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

29. U.S. Patent No. 5,966,437 to Cox et al ("Cox '437")

(Cox '437 was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

The Cox '437 patent discloses a method for presenting a personalized message during directory assistance. Upon receipt of a call to directory assistance, the originating telephone number of the call may be identified and message including a name associated with the originating telephone number may be presented to the caller. The Cox '437 patent further contains disclosure related to personalized directory assistance. A caller may call a directory assistance service and request a listing. An operator may connect the caller to the desired telephone and monitor the progress of the call. If the customer signals an intent to recontact directory assistance, such as by pressing a specified key on the telephone keypad, the customer

may be redirected to directory assistance for further assistance. Alternatively, if the call connected from directory assistance to the listing cannot be completed, the caller may elect to leave a voice or text message, page the intended callee at another number, call the requested listing again or return to directory assistance. The Cox '437 patent contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does the Cox '437 patent disclose routing calls made to an unavailable number to directory assistance. Further, the Cox '437 patent does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Cox '437 patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

30. U.S. Patent No. 5,983,544 to Fagan ("Fagan")

Fagan discloses an advertising display for displaying advertising messages on a telephone booth. Fagan contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service, nor providing advertising to the caller. The present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

31. U.S. Patent No. 5,987,424 to Nakamura ("Nakamura")

Nakamura discloses a method and system for discounted phone service charges. A caller desiring to make a call may be provided with one or more advertisements when initiating the call. For each advertisement the caller listens to, the caller may receive a predetermined discount on the cost of the subsequent call made by the caller to another party. Nakamura further discloses targeting advertisements based on characteristics associated with the caller. Nakamura, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Nakamura disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Nakamura, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call,

providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

32. U.S. Patent No. 6,009,161 to Babbitt et al ("Babbitt")

(Babbitt was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Babbitt discloses a method for monitoring a directory assistance call. A directory assistance operator attempts to connect the caller to the directory listing and then disconnects the operator position from the call. After the operator is disconnected, the call is supervised for a remote answer and a time-out clock is started. After a specified period of time, the caller may be presented with various options regarding the attempted call. Babbitt contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Babbitt disclose routing calls made to an unavailable number to directory assistance. Further, Babbitt does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to Babbitt, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

33. U.S. Patent No. 6,035,190 to Cox et al ("Cox '190")

(Cox '190 was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

The Cox '190 patent discloses a method for personalized directory assistance. A caller may call a directory assistance service and request a listing. An operator may connect the caller to the desired telephone and monitor the progress of the call. If the customer signals an intent to recontact directory assistance, such as by pressing a specified key on the telephone keypad, the customer may be redirected to directory assistance for further assistance. Alternatively, if the call connected from directory assistance to the listing cannot be completed, the caller may elect to leave a voice or text message, page the intended callee at another number, call the requested listing again or return to directory assistance. The Cox '190 patent contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does the Cox '190 patent disclose routing calls made to an unavailable number to directory assistance. Further, the Cox '190 patent does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In

contrast, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

34. U.S. Patent No. 6,038,307 to Fahrer et al ("Fahrer")

Fahrer discloses a method and apparatus for international redial service for callers who attempt to complete telephone calls to parties via foreign telephone networks. If a call is not completed, the foreign network returns unsuccessful call completion information related to the cause of the call completion failure. International redial service may be selectively based on the unsuccessful call completion information. Fahrer contains no disclosure relating to routing unsuccessful calls to directory assistance. Further, Fahrer does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Fahrer patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

35. U.S. Patent No. 6,084,628 to Sawyer ("Sawyer")

Sawyer discloses a method and system for provided targeting advertising during video telephone calls. One or more advertisements may be selected based on information related to the parties of a video telephone call. The advertisements then may be displayed on the screens of one or more of the video screens of the video telephones of the respective parties. Sawyer, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Sawyer disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Sawyer, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

36. U.S. Patent No. 6,104,786 to Gibilisco et al ("Gibilisco")

(Gibilisco was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Gibilisco discloses a method for providing a menu of options to a caller attempting to establish a call to a called party. In the event that the called number is not in service, the caller is presented with the option of contacting a directory assistance service. If the caller replies affirmatively, the caller is forwarded to a directory assistance service. Gibilisco, however, does not disclose the automatic routing of a call to a directory assistance service when the call is made to an unavailable number. Further, Gibilisco does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Gibilisco patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

37. U.S. Patent No. 6,178,446 to Gerszberg et al ("Gerszberg")

Gerszberg discloses a method and system whereby commercial information from at least one television network is transmitted to a video system via a telephone network. Gerszberg, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Gerszberg disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. Further, Gerszberg does not disclose the provision of advertisements to a telephone caller. In contrast to Gerszberg, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

38. U.S. Patent No. 6,188,751 to Scherer ("Scherer")

Scherer discloses a method for obtaining information related to a caller placing a telephone call. Scherer contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Scherer disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Scherer does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Scherer patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made

to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

39. U.S. Patent No. 6,198,812 to Weber ("Weber")

Weber discloses a method for filtering incoming telephone calls. Weber contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Weber disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Weber does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Weber patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

40. U.S. Patent No. 6,205,215 to Dombakly ("Dombakly")

Dombakly discloses a method and system processing calls from a first country to a second country. If the call cannot be completed as dialed, the call is forwarded to a live operator who can speak the first national language for assistance. While providing for live operator assistance, Dombakly does not contemplate the use of non-human directory assistance. Further, Dombakly does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Dombakly patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

41. U.S. Patent No. 6,256,515 to Cox et al ("Cox '515")

The Cox '515 patent discloses a method and system for managing the use of wireless telephones in order to limit or manage their use for unofficial calls and to report on official as well as unofficial uses. Calls to or from a controlled wireless telephone are routed to a management center. The management center determines whether the call is approved by consulting a database of approved numbers. If approved, the call is conventionally completed. If not approved, the caller is prompted to provide an access code. The Cox '515 patent contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor

does the Cox '515 patent disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, the Cox '515 does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

42. U.S. Patent No. 6,301,338 to Mäkelä et al ("Mäkelä")

Mäkelä discloses an apparatus and method for activating a telephone's call answering equipment based on the telephone number of the calling party. Mäkelä contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Mäkelä disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Mäkelä does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Mäkelä patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

43. U.S. Patent No. 6,301,342 to Ander et al ("Ander")

Ander discloses a method whereby a first subscriber initiates a telephone call to a second subscriber via a third subscriber who receives the bill for the telephone call. Prior to commencing communications between the first subscriber and the second subscriber, a stream of advertisements is provided. Upon entering an access code by one of the subscribers, the provision of the stream of advertisements ceases and the first and second subscribers can commence communicating. Ander, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Ander disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Ander, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

44. U.S. Patent No. 6,310,948 to Nemeth ("Nemeth")

(Nemeth was cited in the IDS filed on October 10, 2002)

Nemeth discloses a method for detecting and correcting an incorrectly dialed international phone call. An international phone called having an incorrectly dialed number may be detected by comparing some combination of the dialed country code, city code and dialed directory number. After detecting the incorrectly dialed number, the number can be corrected and the caller redirected to the new number automatically or the caller may be informed of the correct number and prompted to permit the automatic redialing using the corrected number. Nemeth contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Nemeth disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, Nemeth does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Nemeth patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

45. U.S. Patent No. 6,327,344 to Paxson ("Paxson")

Paxson discloses a method and apparatus whereby a subscriber to a telephone number previously in use is provided with an access code. A call made to the telephone number is intercepted and the caller is queried for the correct access code. If the correct access code is given, the call is completed. Otherwise, the access code is compared to access codes in a historical database of access codes to identify another subscriber associated with the provided access code. If the caller requests further directory assistance, the caller is provided with current information on the party with the access code given by the caller. Paxson contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers. Rather, Paxson describes the interception of calls made to telephone numbers having a history of different subscribers. Further, Paxson describes routing the call to directory service only after the caller responds affirmatively. Additionally, Paxson does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Paxson patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call,

providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

46. U.S. Patent No. 6,347,225 to Nishiyama ("Nishiyama")

Nishiyama discloses a system and method for providing response messages to callers calling a radio telephone. When a caller calls the radio telephone, the caller's number is compared to a listing. If the caller's number is found in the listing, a response message associated with the listing is relayed to the caller. Nishiyama contains no disclosure relating to the detection and interception of calls made to unavailable numbers, nor does Nishiyama disclose routing calls to directory assistance. Further, while Nishiyama discloses providing a response message to the caller, Nishiyama does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller. In contrast to the Nishiyama patent, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

47. U.S. Patent No. 6,456,709 to Cox et al ("Cox '709")

The Cox '709 patent discloses a system and method for providing directory assistance service. After a caller connects to directory service, a call is placed to a telephone number indicated by the caller by the directory service. The directory assistance service monitors the call and if the called party's line is busy or otherwise unavailable, the caller is redirected to directory assistance service. The present claims recite a method and system whereby a caller's telephone call to an unavailable number is detected, the telephone call is intercepted and then automatically routed to a directory assistance service. Additionally, one or more advertisements are provided to the caller. In contrast to the present invention, the Cox '709 patent describes a system and method whereby the directory assistance service places a call to the unavailable number on behalf of the caller and intercepts this phone call when the called party is unavailable rather than intercepting a telephone call directly to the unavailable number. Further, the Cox '709 patent does not disclose providing advertisements to the caller.

48. U.S. Patent No. 6,473,612 to Cox et al ("Cox '612")

The Cox '612 patent discloses a system and method for providing directory assistance service. After being connected to directory service, a call is placed to a telephone number indicated by the caller. The directory assistance service monitors the call and if the called party's line is busy or otherwise unavailable, the caller is presented with a number of options, including redialing the number, leaving a message, or being redirected to directory assistance service. Upon selection of an option by the caller, the requested option is performed. The present claims recite a method and system whereby a caller's telephone call to an unavailable number is detected, the telephone call is intercepted and then automatically routed to a directory assistance service. Additionally, one or more advertisements are provided to the caller. In contrast to the present invention, the Cox '612 patent describes a system and method whereby the directory assistance service places a call to the unavailable number on behalf of the caller and intercepts this phone call when the called party is unavailable. Further, the Cox '612 patent describes reconnecting the caller to directory assistance service only after the caller has provided input indicating the caller's intent to be reconnected to directory assistance service. The Cox '612 patent also contains no disclosure related to the provision of advertisements to the caller.

49. U.S. Patent No. 6,587,138 to Vogt et al ("Vogt")

Vogt discloses a method and system for providing advertisements during a video telephone call. During a video telephone call, the caller is requested to perform an interactive action. If the caller performs the interactive action within a certain time period, a video advertisement is provided for the caller's viewing and a fee for the video telephone call may be reduced. Otherwise, if the caller does not perform the interactive action, the fee may increase. Vogt, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Vogt disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Vogt, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

50. U.S. Patent No. 6,590,970 to Cai et al ("Cai")

Cai discloses a method and system for providing advertisements to a caller in exchange for a free telephone call. A caller using the system is routed to an service switching point wherein the caller is presented with the choice of a number of product or service advertisements. After selecting and listening to an advertisement, the caller is connected to a telephone number indicated by the caller at no charge for a predetermined period of time. Cai, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Cai disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Cai, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

51. U.S. Patent No. 6,597,769 to Snow ("Snow")

Snow discloses a method and system for placing orders for goods via a telephone. Using a computer connected to the Internet, a user can modify the user's account so that certain codes are associated with certain desired goods. The user then may use a telephone associated with the account to place an order for a desired good by inputting the associated custom code. The order is then transmitted to the responsible vendor. Snow contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Snow disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Snow, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

52. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2001/0012344 to Kwon ("Kwon")

Kwon discloses a method and system for providing video advertisements during a telephone call using a public pay phone. While using a public payphone to make a call, the caller may earn discounted or eliminated phone toll charges by viewing one or more video advertisements displayed by the public pay phone. Kwon, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does

Kwon disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Kwon, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

53. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/0044639 to Shioda et al ("Shioda")

Shioda discloses a method and system for providing targeted advertisements during a telephone call. Preferences associated with a communication terminal user are used to select one or more advertisements to provide to the user during the telephone call. Shioda, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Shioda disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Shioda, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

54. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/0051521 to Patrick ("Patrick")

Patrick discloses a system for providing targeted advertisements during a telephone call. A subscriber provides a telephone number to which the subscriber would like to be connected. Based on a profile associated with the subscriber, an advertisement is selected and provided to the subscriber. After listening to the advertisement, the subscriber is connected to the indicated telephone number. Patrick, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Patrick disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Patrick, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

55. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/0091566 to Siegel ("Siegel")

Siegel discloses a method and system for providing promotions to a caller. The caller may initiate a call to host computer having a database of promotions. Based on input provided

by the caller using an interactive voice response system, one or more promotions are selected and provided to the caller during the telephone call. Frequent callers may have promotions provided without providing input during each call. Siegel, however, contains no disclosure related to providing advertising during a phone call between the caller and a third party, nor does Siegel disclose the detection and interception a telephone call made to an unavailable number and the routing of such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Siegel, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

56. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/0194061 to Himmel et al ("Himmel")

Himmel discloses a method and system for providing advertisements to a mobile telephone. A mobile phone user provides one or more keywords describing products or services of interest to the caller. An advertiser corresponding to the one or more keywords is selected and one or more advertisements from the advertiser are provided to the mobile phone user. Himmel, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Himmel disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Himmel, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

57. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0007620 to Elsey et al ("Elsey")

Elsey discloses a system and method for providing directory assistance service. After being connected to directory service, a call is placed to a telephone number indicated by the caller. The directory assistance service monitors the call and if the called party's line is busy or otherwise unavailable, the caller is redirected to directory assistance service. The present claims recite a method and system whereby a caller's telephone call to an unavailable number is detected, the telephone call is intercepted and automatically routed to a directory assistance service. One or more advertisements are provided to the caller. In contrast to the present invention, Elsey describes a system and method whereby the directory assistance service places a

call to the unavailable number on behalf of the caller and intercepts this phone call when the called party is unavailable rather than intercepting a telephone call directly to the unavailable number. Furthermore, Elsey does not disclose the provision of advertisements to the caller.

58. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0033198 to Flannery et al ("Flannery")

Flannery discloses a method and system for providing advertisements during a telephone call made using a prepaid telephone card. The prepaid telephone card caller initiates a telephone call using a telephone number provided with the card and a personal identification number (PIN). One or more advertisements are selected based on the PIN and/or other call characteristics and provided to the caller. The caller is provided with the option to connect to the vendor featured in the advertisement. Flannery, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Flannery disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Flannery, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

59. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0050837 to Kim ("Kim")

Kim discloses a method and system for providing advertisements during or in place of the ringing tones during a telephone call to or from a mobile phone. When placing a telephone call to a mobile phone, the mobile phone may output or display an audio or video advertisement in place of conventional ringing tones. When placing a telephone call using a mobile phone, the mobile phone may output or display an audio or video advertisement in place of the conventional ringing tones normally heard by the mobile phone caller. Kim, however, contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Kim disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Kim, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

60. U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0063721 to Hirose ("Hirose")

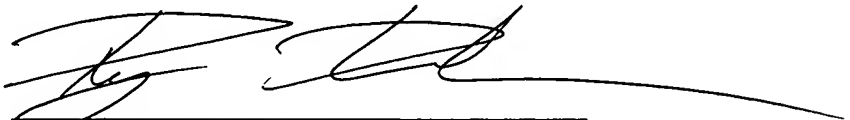
Hirose discloses a method and apparatus for providing a business advertisement to a calling party making a telephone call to a certain called party. If the called party is identified as a member of a management table that links called party identifiers to business advertisements, an associated business advertisement is provided to the calling party. Hirose contains no disclosure related to detecting and intercepting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, nor does Hirose disclose routing such intercepted calls to a directory assistance service. In contrast to Hirose, the present claims recite a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service.

In summary, the prior art discovered by the Applicant during the pre-examination search primarily relates to: (i) intercepting and handling telephone calls made to unavailable numbers; (ii) providing directory assistance service; and (iii) telephone advertising. The claimed invention recites a method and system for detecting a telephone call made to an unavailable number, intercepting the telephone call, providing at least one advertisement to the caller and automatically routing the telephone call to a directory assistance service. The prior art references fail to show or suggest a method or system as described and claimed by the present invention.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests granting this Petition To Make Special so that the application will be taken up promptly.

Respectfully submitted,
HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP

By:



Ryan S. Davidson
Reg. No. 51,596

1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-1109
Telephone: (202) 955-1500
Facsimile: (202) 778-2201
Date: August 20, 2003